Information pack for joining the Student Counselling Research Outcomes and Evaluation (SCORE) consortium

| Building evidence for the sector

This document is designed to support institutions wishing to join SCORE – a consortium of student counselling centres who pool data for the purposes of research and service improvement.

| Institutions and funding

- o Afra Turner (Chair, King's College London)
- o Louise Knowles (Vice Chair, University of Sheffield)
- o Charlotte Williams (Birkbeck University of London)
- o Géraldine Dufour (University of Cambridge)
- o Mark Fudge (Keele University)
- o Alan Percy (University of Oxford)
- o Research department at the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)
- o Funding sponsorship from the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)

Contact

Enquiries regarding the process of joining SCORE can be sent to:
Emma Broglia (emma.broglia@bacp.co.uk);

General enquiries regarding SCORE can be sent to:
Afra Turner (afra.turner@kcl.ac.uk); or
Michael Barkham (m.barkham@sheffield.ac.uk);

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1. Overview of project and aims

The SCORE project has arisen from a long-running wish of the university and college counselling sector to create a pooled routine outcomes database to:

- Provide fit-for-purpose tools and information for members
- Improve practice in student counselling
- Continue to build the evidence base of student university and college counselling outcomes

The feasibility and pilot work commenced in October 2018 and the procedures have been established and adopted by the current SCORE consortium members:

- Birkbeck University London
- Keele University
- King's College London
- University of Cambridge
- University of Oxford
- University of Sheffield

The work of the group is also supported by researchers; Professor Michael Barkham (University of Sheffield) and the research department at BACP.

1.1 Funding

The work of the SCORE group is supported by two professional organisations; the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP), through financial and in-kind contributions of researcher time (BACP) and funding to develop and deliver training workshops for new SCORE members (UKCP).

1.2 Independence

The SCORE group is a practitioner-academic group that, although receiving infrastructure support from BACP and UKCP, is wholly independent of these organisations as well as being independent of other affiliations and groups (e.g., Heads of University and College counselling). Group members represent their counselling services and institutions.

1.3 Progress and plans for 2020-2021

The SCORE group has been meeting since 2018. The first pilot has been conducted, with SCORE members successfully pooling data for the purposes of research, and the data is currently being analysed in preparation for submission to a UK journal. Observations from the feasibility work have also been presented at UK and international research conferences, including: BACP research conference, University and College Counselling (UCC) Division conference, Society for Psychotherapy Research (SPR) in Kraków and the SMaRteN Student Conference (upcoming).

The primary aim for 2020-21 is to grow the number of SCORE members and to collectively pool the counselling data from previous academic years included in the current pooled dataset (e.g., 2017/18

and 2018/19). A secondary aim is to deliver further research outputs in the form of research and professional articles, conference presentations and training materials. UK conferences may include the BACP research conference and UKCP conferences. International conferences may include the SPR conferences as well as professional student counselling and student services conferences. By growing the SCORE membership, the project intends to expand the SCORE database while seeking to secure external research funding to facilitate the creation of a secure member-accessible data hub to support research on student counselling and mental health outcomes. Therefore, a key aim for the SCORE consortium members is to work collectively to develop grant applications.

2. What will services gain from joining SCORE?

The SCORE project was set up set in response to the growing concerns about the mental health needs of university and college students at a time of concurrent threat to embedded counselling services. The founding members of SCORE felt that, in this context, it was critically important that the sector generate credible national evidence of the efficacy of embedded student counselling services.

In September 2019, Norman Lamb MP roundly criticised mental health provision in universities. In doing so he pointed out that the data around student mental health – for example, around waiting times at university counselling centres – is all too often patchy. This type of focus on the work of universities broadly and university and college counselling centres more specifically, highlights the benefits of SCORE membership. The SCORE consortium have mirrored these concerns in their first paper published in *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research* journal (see Barkham et al., 2019). In this paper, the consortium asked the sector to respond to three core priorities: 1) use clear definitions for student mental health, mental ill-health and well-being without confounding the terms, 2) capture the full developmental transitions of students before, during and after university, and 3) collect robust data on student mental health and wellbeing (e.g., good quality service data as opposed to small scale surveys).

Membership of SCORE will allow services to:

- Improve their understanding of their own data including service outcomes
- Better understand the performance of their service against the sector
- Potentially improve how they collect data on student outcomes
- Cascade skills across the sector and share good practice
- Contribute to the evidence base for embedded counselling services
- Engage in research and dissemination of findings
- Contribute to future research funding applications to grow the project

3. What will services need to commit to if they join?

In keeping with the aims of the group, members will be asked to commit to the following:

- All members will sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), the Terms of Reference (ToR) and Authoring Guidelines (see Appendices)
- All members will prepare their retrospective counselling centre data (since academic year 2017/18) for sharing. This will include pseudonymisation of the data at source, encrypting and transferring to BACP by May 2020 (training workshops and support will be provided)
- All members will be responsible for ensuring that local ethics committees or equivalent have agreed to the pooling of pseudonymised counselling centre data for the purposes of the SCORE group (see pseudonymisation section for further information)

4. What support will services have?

General information about the project – SCORE has been presented at BACP and UKCP events and will be presented again in the New Year (dates tbc). At both events there will be opportunities to ask questions or you could email one of the contacts on the cover of this pack.

Project buddy – The intent is that new members will be paired with a contact at another institution who has completed the data exercises at their institution. The role of the buddy will be to provide support and advice (e.g., on issues to do with working with data management systems and getting ethics).

Guidance documents – A number of guides have been written to support SCORE members with all the technical steps necessary to process data as a SCORE member. Examples include: how to export data from Titanium and CORE Net, how to pseudonymise data using Microsoft Excel, and how to encrypt data files to secure and transfer data to the data hub.

Webinars and videos - There is an intent to develop short 'how-to' video tutorials to support members alongside the written guides.

4.1 Workshops for new members

Four face-to-face workshops will be available to members to support them in submitting their data to the SCORE project. Workshops will provide:

- o An overview of research findings from SCORE to date
- o An introduction to processing service data
- o Discussion of typical issues when exporting data
- o A troubleshooting session for any issues new members are facing
- o Bookable one-to-one time with a workshop facilitator to discuss/troubleshoot specific issues
- o Opportunities to give feedback on what a national dataset should include

The first two workshops planned for 2020 include:

- o CORE Net and data processing workshop in spring 2020 (London)
- o Titanium and data processing workshop in summer 2020 (Sheffield)

Parts of the workshops will be filmed and made available after the event to provide an ongoing resource. These workshops will also be repeated later in the year in Sheffield and London.

5. When will services be asked to contribute to the project?

5.1 Important dates for sharing data

All members will be asked to prepare their retrospective counselling centre data (since academic year 2017/18) for sharing. This will include pseudonymisation of the data at source, encrypting and sending to BACP by May 2020 (training workshops and support will be provided).

All members will be asked to repeat the data processing exercise annually, each time providing data on the previous academic year. Reminders to submit data from the previous academic year will be provided and this activity would usually start in November with a January deadline. For example, the deadline to submit data for the 2020/21 period will be January 2022 or sooner if available.

6. What are the next steps after reading this pack?

1. Email enquiries to one of the contacts provided on the cover of this pack

2. If you're interested in joining SCORE:

Email Emma Broglia (see cover) with a signed copy of the MoU and -

Provide the following information:
- The clinical measures you use (e.g., CORE-OM)
- Whether your service uses paper or electronic forms
  - **If electronic:** please also state, the computer system used in your service (e.g. CORE Net or Titanium)
  - **If paper-based:** please also state, whether the data is available in Microsoft Excel or whether it could be inputted into Microsoft Excel.

Based on this information, you will then be introduced to your project buddy via email.

Edit and send the ethics submission to your ethics committee making sure to copy Emma Broglia into the email.

If you do not know who to email the ethics submission to, ask your project buddy for advice and they can guide you.

Share this pack with your counselling team and discuss the project with them. This will help you plan the data export and processing exercises around your staff availability and ongoing service commitments.

Identify someone in your team who has the skills and access to the computer system used in your service or, if paper-based, access to the spreadsheet containing data from your clinical forms.

It is likely that this person and/or the head of service could attend a workshop to receive help with processing data. You do not need any prior knowledge of data processing to attend the workshop.

Register for a free workshop - Registration is yet to open and information will be emailed to you in the New Year.

6.1 What if I cannot attend a workshop?

Step-by-step guides will be provided alongside short video tutorials to help you to process your data. You will also have the support of your project buddy and Emma Broglia.

6.2 Do I have to attend a workshop in order to contribute data?

No – if you are able to process your data using the guides and tutorials without needing to attend a workshop then you may transfer your data to BACP once you are ready (i.e., once you have ethics approved and have signed the MoU). First email Emma Broglia to schedule a time and date to transfer the data and discuss the process.

7. Appendices

7.1 Paper published in *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*

The rationale for the work of the SCORE consortium has been outlined in a paper published in the *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research* journal. The abstract has been provided below along with the website link to the full paper. We are also currently preparing the first outcomes paper, which includes analysis on data contributed from the current SCORE members.

Towards an evidence-base for student wellbeing and mental health: Definitions, developmental transitions and data sets

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Abstract
Against a background of huge changes in the world of university and college students since the turn of the millennium, together with a multitude of reports on student mental health/wellbeing, this article argues that the field of student mental health is hampered by the imprecise use of terms, a rush to action by universities in the absence of a robust evidence-base, and a lack of overall coordination and collaboration in the collection and use of data. In response, we argue for clearer and more consistent use of definitions of, as well as differentiations between, student wellbeing and mental health, for a longitudinal approach to the student body that captures their developmental transitions to and through university, and a strategic and systematic approach to the use of bona fide measures in the collection of data on wellbeing and on the process of outcomes in embedded university counselling services. Such a coordinated approach will provide the necessary evidence-base upon which to develop and deliver appropriate support and interventions to underpin and enhance the quality of students' lives and learning while at university or college.

Access the full paper here: https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/capr.12227

7.2 Ethics approval and suggested text

The current consortium members each sought ethical approval from their institution and first contacted their primary contact from their research or service ethics committee (e.g., the committee chair). This initial contact checked whether services could participate under the remit of routine audit and evaluation and versions of the following text were used:

Dear Ethics Committee [replace with name],

Our university/college counselling service is engaged as part of a consortium of university and college student counselling services in developing a project to jointly analyse counselling session routine outcome data. While student counselling services collect and routinely evaluate their own outcomes, the aim of this project is to work towards developing a national pooled dataset that can be used to examine the outcomes of embedded student counselling services, an issue of considerable national importance given current concerns about high levels of distress in HE and FE students.

To inform this work, the university and college counselling services will share routinely collected and pseudonymised service data (anonymous to external parties) from the academic year [e.g. 2017/18 and 2018/19] with the research team at the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). This is so that the data can be pooled across all participating services. The data will be encrypted, password protected and securely transferred and will align with the data protection policies in place at BACP and [institution name]. Examples of dummy pseudonymised data are attached.

This work is important for clients and practitioners and will provide evidence for the range of issues where therapy can be effective and the positive outcomes for clients. The proof of concept for such data sharing, pooling and analysing has been established in 5 pilot services and our university/college counselling team would like to contribute to this work. The project is being supported by the BACP research department and has received funding from the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP).

Please could you advise if we need ethics for this kind of data sharing?

I have cc'd Emma Broglia from BACP, who will be analysing the data and may be able to add to this email if required.

7.3 What do we mean by pseudonymised data?

The SCORE project aims to explore student outcomes following counselling in order to provide evidence on the effectiveness of counselling and to inform service development. This involves pooling and analysing retrospective data collected routinely by counselling services (e.g., demographic and clinical data) to perform analyses that would not otherwise be possible in smaller or single site datasets. For example, because data on minority groups are too small to analyse (e.g., students disclosing disability, mature students, and/or Black, Asian and minority ethic students).

The only conditions under which data can be termed 'anonymised' are when all variables that are associated with the person (age, gender, etc.) are removed. This cannot be applied to the service data contributed to the SCORE dataset because the project analyses demographic information. To protect the identity of students, the data are processed to remove identifiable information and several security procedures are used to reduce the risk of identifying individuals. The SCORE project achieves this through pseudonymisation, which is the internationally recognised procedure and standard.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the independent regulatory office in charge of upholding information rights in the interest of the public. According to the ICO:

Pseudonymisation is a technique that replaces or removes information in a data set that identifies an individual. The GDPR [General Data Protection Regulation] defines pseudonymisation as:

"…the processing of personal data in such a manner that the personal data can no longer be attributed to a specific data subject without the use of additional information, provided that such additional information is kept separately and is subject to technical and organisational measures to ensure that the personal data are not attributed to an identified or identifiable natural person."

Pseudonymisation may involve replacing names or other identifiers which are easily attributed to individuals with, for example, a reference number. Whilst you can tie that reference number back to the individual if you have access to the relevant information, you put technical and organisational measures in place to ensure that this additional information is held separately.

Pseudonymising personal data can reduce the risks to the data subjects and help you meet your data protection obligations.

Here is an example of what pseudonymised data might look like:

Before pseudonymisation		
Qualification	Faculty	Gender
UG	English	Female
PG taught	English	Female
UG	Science	Female
UG	Medicine	Male
UG	Law	Other
PG taught	Science	Male

After pseudonymisation		
Q2519	Q8796	Q2734
135	623	845
298	623	845
135	745	845
135	365	221
135	891	495
298	745	221

This data file would then be **password protected** using a strong password and **encrypted** using open source encryption software. Encryption is a process that encodes a file so that it can only be read by certain people. It uses an algorithm to scramble data to an unreadable form and then uses a key for the receiving party to unscramble (decrypt) the information.

7.4 Draft Memorandum of Understanding

The MoU is currently being reviewed and subject to change. In the meantime, an example of the draft MoU has been provided below:

SCORE

Student Counselling Research, Outcomes & Evaluation
Memorandum of Understanding

This MoU is an agreement between the following parties:

Party A

Organisation Name	
Nominated Contact	
Position	
Email	

Party B

Organisation Name	
Address	
Nominated Contact	
Position	
Email	

Party C

Organisation Name	
Address	
Nominated Contact	
Position	
Email	

Party D

Organisation Name	
Address	
Nominated Contact	
Position	
Email	

Party E

Organisation Name	
Address	
Nominated Contact	
Position	
Email	

1. Purpose, Scope and Aims

1.1 Purpose

The above-named parties have agreed to work together to create a shared database for university and college student counselling outcomes data, which provides the basis for large-scale analyses of student counselling outcomes that provide evidence for the sector and can be used to improve service delivery.

This MoU has been created to describe the financial and associated management commitments necessary to deliver the database and will last for the life of the project (as defined by the Steering Group) but be subject to a formal review annually.

1.2 Scope

All named organisations will engage in regular communications, between the named parties to share progress made on the objectives, and the impact, of the project.

All parties will have an equal number of votes on the SCORE steering group, to ensure oversight and input on behalf of each organisation. The project steering group will also include invited non-voting members. The Steering Group will have a Chair drawn from the signatories. See steering group *Terms of Reference* for further details of project governance.

1.3 Aims

The primary aim of SCORE is to build a shared database that will attract student counselling centre subscribers across the sector and can be used to:

- Build evidence of student (HE/FE/Sixth Form) counselling outcomes
- Improve practice in student counselling
- Provide fit-for-purpose tools and information for members

This agreement does not preclude partnerships with any other organisations.

2. Background

This MoU is set up as a response to the growing concerns about the mental health needs of university and college students at a time of concurrent threat to embedded counselling services. In this context it is important that the sector organizes to generate credible national evidence of the efficacy of embedded student counselling services.

2.1 Outcomes

The MoU aims will be accomplished by setting up a database that enables standardised and bespoke data collection for members and creation of institution level as well as aggregate data reports on student counselling outcomes.

3. Common Principles

All organisations agree to a set of principles, which will inform the process of partnership. We agree to:
- Work together in an open, co-operative and collaborative manner (and with other delivery partners where applicable) to support the development of the project output

- Share information in a regular and transparent way
- Take appropriate action via the Steering Group if there are any difficulties in meeting the responsibilities outlined in this MoU
- Ensure the confidentiality of any information and/or discussions associated with this MoU
- Adhere to the requirements of all current legislation including GDPR, freedom of information and copyright law
- Always act in the spirit of partnership for all activity associated with this MoU.

We further agree the following principles related to *data sharing*:

- Any data shared through this project will be anonymized (e.g. personally identifying data such as names removed) at source.
- Demographic data will only ever be reported in aggregate.
- Each student counselling centre member will retain ownership of their own data.
- No student counselling center member will be able to see the data or institution-level reports of other members.
- Any reports of aggregated data created in SCORE will not identify individual institutions.
- Any person who undertakes data processing or data analysis on behalf of SCORE will be expected to rigorously maintain the confidentiality of the data and not disclose or otherwise make public any institution-level data or data-analysis.

4. Commitments

4.1 Data sharing

MoU SCORE members that are student counselling centres agree to upload their anonymized student counselling outcomes data to the SCORE database at agreed timepoints.

4.2 Steering Committee participation

MoU SCORE members agree to participate in the project steering committee and to keep to the Terms of Reference for this committee.

4.3 Funding

BACP agrees to provide funding towards the costs of setting up the SCORE database; if required additional funding may be sought through grant funding.

5. Confidentiality - This clause is intended to be legally binding.

The parties agree and acknowledge that both the terms of this MoU and the discussions relating to the collaborative activity are confidential and no party will disclose them without the prior written consent of the other parties. Each party undertakes that it shall not at any time disclose to any person any confidential information concerning the activities, business or affairs of the other party except as permitted below:

Each party may disclose other party's confidential information:

    i)   To its employees, officers, or advisors who need to know such information for the purposes of carrying out the MOU. Each party shall ensure that its employees, officers,

or advisors to whom it discloses the other party's confidential information comply with this clause; and

ii)   As may be required by law, court order or any government or regulatory authority.

No party shall use any other party's confidential information for any purpose other than to perform its obligations under this MOU.

6. Brand and Logo

No party shall use or refer to the name, logo or any other designation of the other Party without the prior written consent of that other Party (such consent not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed). The Parties shall immediately cease to use in any manner whatsoever such materials and the logos, trademarks or other intellectual property rights of the other Party upon termination or expiry of this Agreement for any reason, unless superseded by another agreement (see point 7).

7. Amendments

This MoU can be amended at any time provided all parties are in agreement. If all parties cannot agree the MoU shall remain unaltered.

8. Breaches

In the unlikely event of any breach of this MoU, such a breach should be notified as soon as reasonably possible to the agreeing parties who will then agree what course of action is appropriate.

Where any issues arise, all parties agree to work together to resolve these in a partnership approach. If this is not possible, resolution should be sought by escalating to the appropriate executive level within each organisation.

The parties affirm to know, understand and agree to all articles of this MoU as negotiated together

9. Term of MoU

The effective date for the MoU is December 2018 and is valid for a period of 2 years. The areas of collaboration will be reviewed annually and updated accordingly.

10. General - This clause is intended to be legally binding.

The parties agree that they will comply with the relevant rules, regulations, policies and procedures of the other organisation to the extent necessary for the purposes of the implementation and operation of this MOU. The parties agree that, save as expressly set out herein the signing of this MOU does not create any legally binding obligations between the parties. This MOU will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of England and Wales. The parties agree to submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Courts of England and Wales.

MoU Signatories

Name	Title	Organization	Date	Signature

7.5 Draft Terms of Reference

The ToR is currently being reviewed and subject to change. In the meantime, an example of the draft ToR has been provided below:

SCORE
Student Counselling Research, Outcomes & Evaluation
Steering committee terms of reference

The function of the SCORE *Steering Committee* is to provide leadership for the SCORE consortium, pursuing the goals as laid out in the SCORE Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). SCORE *Working Groups* are small groups, appointed by the main SCORE Steering Committee with specific tasks, timescales and targets.

1. Duties

The SCORE steering committee shall:

1.1	Provide Governance for SCORE (as detailed in the SCORE MoU) including providing overall direction and overseeing the work of the individual project working groups.
1.2	Monitor and evaluate the progress towards goals as detailed in the SCORE MoU.
1.3	Appoint additional or replacement committee members when needful.
1.4	Appoint to/participate in working groups for specific projects.
1.5	Monitor progress of working groups and represent the voice of such at steering Group meetings.
1.6	The committee shall not make or authorise a decision which is contrary to any policy that has been set out in the SCORE MoU.

2. Principles

The principles of the steering committee are a commitment to:
- Democratic governance systems, such that all who contribute data to the SCORE database should have a say in how the database is developed and aggregate data is used;
- Productive collaboration with a focus on solving any problems and resolving potential conflicts;
- Developing a governance system that provides a firm foundation for SCORE into the future;
- Creative consideration as SCORE membership grows to developing a process whereby members vote to elect Steering Committee members.

3. Membership

3.1 Steering Committee membership

3.1.1	The Chair of the Committee will be appointed from one of the institutional signatories of the MOU. The Chair will operate in a voluntary role with a two-year tenure; the aim is to have a Chair Elect and Past Chair to provide support to the Chair. Chairs will be chosen on the basis of expressions of interest; a vote will be held in the event of more than one candidate putting themselves forward.
3.1.2	The remaining institutional committee members for SCORE will consist of the signatories of the MoU. Each MoU signaturatory will have a vote on the Committee.
3.1.3	The committee will also include one to two invited voting members whose role it is to provide research expertise to SCORE. Research members are expected to agree to the principles of SCORE as laid out in this document and in the MoU.
3.1.4	The committee will also include invited non-voting members. These members shall consist of representation from relevant professional bodies in the sector which includes the BACP Universities and Colleges Division. Non-voting members are expected to agree to the principles of SCORE as laid out in this document and in the MoU.
3.1.5	Observers (e.g. project data analysts) may also be invited to attend.

3.1.6   The group will need to agree membership criteria before inviting additional institutional members to join the group in order to accomplish the goals of SCORE. Potential criteria will be a commitment to data sharing for the goals of SCORE and signing the MoU.

3.1.7   In the absence of the Committee Chair, the Chair Elect or Past Chair will chair the meeting.

3.1.8   All appointments to the Committee (barring the Chair) will be for a period of up to three years with an option for renewal for a second term.

3.1.9   All institutions shall have an equal single vote and decisions will be accepted based on majority agreement. In the event of a deadlock it is expected that all members will work to find a compromise acceptable to the majority.

3.1.10   The Chair may resolve that a Committee member be voted out for good cause, provided due notice is given and having opportunity to make representation to the Chair/Committee.

3.2 Working Groups

3.2.1   The working groups shall be established on a task and finish basis; constituted for the duration of a particular need and on completion of a specific task and/or project the group will cease. Whilst in existence they will report to the Steering Committee for the purposes of 1.1 above.

3.2.2   It is expected that working groups will include steering committee members, but they can also include invited external members, such as representatives of counselling centres submitting data to a project or invited researchers with relevant expertise.

4.   Quorum

4.1   The quorum necessary for the transaction of business shall be 60% Committee members. A duly convened meeting of the Committee at which the quorum is present shall be competent to exercise all or any of the authorities, powers and discretions vested or exercisable by the Committee.

5.   Frequency of Meetings

5.1   The Steering Committee shall meet up to four times per year; meetings may be virtual or face-to-face.

5.2   The Working Groups shall meet at a frequency determined by the members to accomplish the working group aims.

6.   Notice of Meetings

6.1   Meetings of the Committee shall be called by the Chair.

6.2   Unless otherwise agreed, notice of each meeting, confirmation of venue, time and date together with agenda items to be discussed shall be forwarded to attendees not later than ten working days before the event of the meeting.

7.   Minutes

7.1   Minutes shall be taken of Steering Committee meetings including the names of those in attendance and the core activities, decisions and action points.

7.2   Minutes will be agreed by the committee at the subsequent meeting.

7.3   Each working group is also expected to prepare a brief report on their core activities, decisions and action points for submission to each steering committee.

7.6 Draft Authoring Guidelines

The authoring guidelines are currently being reviewed and subject to change. In the meantime, an example of the draft authoring guidelines has been provided below:

Who is credited?
For any given academic output (e.g. peer-reviewed journal paper, conference presentation, book chapter) authorship credit should only be granted to those who have made a substantial contribution to:
- Analysis
- Writing (including editing) the paper/conference presentation
- Conceptual contribution (e.g. interpreting findings and informing discussion)

This principle is adopted due to widespread academic and ethical concern over the 'gifting' of authorship credits. For non-academic outputs (e.g., press Release, media story) credit should be given to 'SCORE' including implicitly or explicitly all institutions providing data to the analysis under discussion).

Who is acknowledged?
Authorship can sometimes be granted based on substantial involvement in research design, however for SCORE, which involves pooling data from multiple services, this could lead to an unmanageable number of authors. So, as a principle, in SCORE authorship credit will not be given to those who have only:

(1)   Contributed data to the project and/or
(2)   Served on the SCORE project committee

However, these individuals will be credited through an acknowledgement statement in each academic output, something like:

'The research reported here is the result of the SCORE collaboration, a consortium of HEI/FE and 6th Form colleges who have pooled data on embedded counselling services to allow investigation of student metal health and treatment outcomes.'

If appropriate the contribution of individuals (e.g., SCORE committee members) could also be acknowledged.

First author?
For multi-authored papers there are different conventions in different journals and disciplines about the meaning of the order of the names. Typically, in this discipline the first named author is the person who made the biggest contribution and who carries the ultimate responsibility for the paper, including for its academic integrity, and this should be the principle used unless a journal convention demands otherwise or unless that person elects a different authorship order.

Order of names?
The principle is that the order of names is decided based on descending contribution to the paper's analysis, writing and editing, e.g. with 2nd author being the person who made the 2nd largest contribution.

Decisions about who has substantial involvement?
It is a principle for SCORE that decisions about who is involved in any given academic output/conference presentation are made transparently and fairly. This means:
- Offering involvement in planned academic outputs openly to SCORE members at a beginning stage of any project
- Sharing out fairly across planned SCORE projects opportunities for first authorship
- Deciding at the beginning of a project who will in broad terms be responsible for different aspects of the project, data analysis, first-draft writing and editing
- Only changing author order for any given project following agreement by all members of the authoring team